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EC64-1598 Boxelder Bug Control

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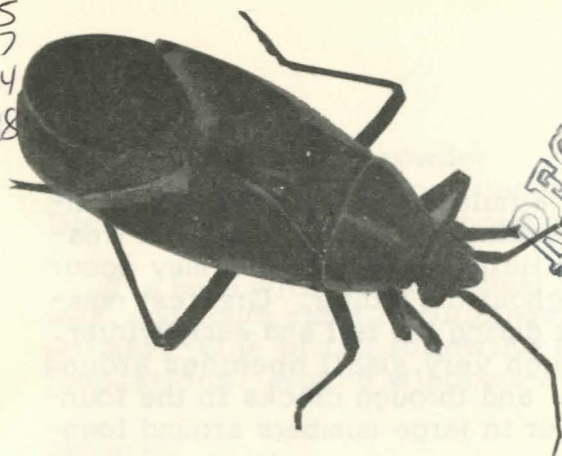
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BOXELDER BUG Control

By Robert Roselle
Extension Entomologist

Description

Boxelder bugs, also called pop bugs, democrat or republican bugs, in the adult stage are about one-half inch long. They are slate-black in color with three red lines behind the head, and red lines on the wings. The young are bright red with darker heads. The body becomes darker as they develop.

Host Plants

The primary host plant is the female (seed producing) boxelder tree. Large numbers of bugs may develop on these trees where they feed by sucking juices. Although they will also feed on male boxelder trees, maple trees, and many other plants, they usually develop in numbers only on the female boxelder.

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Type of Injury

The boxelder bug is a nuisance during the fall, winter, and spring when, seeking shelter from the cold weather, they migrate to buildings. Migrations may occur during warm days throughout the winter. Greatest numbers usually are present during the fall and early winter. They enter homes through very small openings around windows, wires, pipes, and through cracks in the foundation. They often occur in large numbers around foundations seeking entry.

Inside the home they may stain curtains and walls. They do not feed on anything in the home or bite humans or pets.

Life History

In the spring, adult females emerging from their wintering quarters lay eggs on boxelder trees. The eggs hatch in a few days into small insects called nymphs. The nymphs, sucking juices of host plants, molt and increase in size. They become adults in mid-summer when eggs of the second generation are laid. Often nymphs can be observed in large masses in late summer on their host plants. After maturing, the second brood adults begin to seek winter quarters.

Control

Removal of seed-bearing boxelder trees from the premises may help reduce boxelder bug numbers. However, wide area removal of boxelder trees is not suggested. The shade value of trees is often more important than the boxelder bug nuisance.

When young bugs are observed on boxelder trees, spraying will reduce the numbers that will reach maturity. This may be one of the best methods of reducing migrations later in the season. One of the following materials can be used to spray trees.

<u>Material</u>	<u>Amount to 100 gallons water</u>
Sevin, 50% wettable powder	4 pounds
Chlordane, 45% emulsion concentrate	2 quarts
Dieldrin, 15% emulsion concentrate	3 quarts

The bugs will usually appear in large numbers on the west and south sides of buildings where temperatures are warmer. One of the following sprays can be used on foundations, around windows and doors.

<u>Material</u>	<u>Amount to 1 gallon water</u>
Chlordane, 45% emulsion concentrate	4/5 pint
Dieldrin, 15% emulsion concentrate	8 tbs.
Sevin, 50% wettable powder	1 cup

Spraying must be thorough, using sufficient spray material to thoroughly wet the areas on which the bugs collect.

Control in the Home

The best method of control in the home is to vacuum up the insects as they appear, or to destroy them by swatting.

If large numbers of boxelder bugs are present in homes, an aerosol containing 0.25% pyrethrin or allethrin plus a synergist can be used. Following the directions on the can, fill the room with the spray mist, and then close the room for several hours. The windows and doors should then be opened to remove the remaining mist, and the insects should be vacuumed up immediately because they may recover from the effects of the aerosol.

A household spray solution containing 2% chlordane, 0.5% lindane or dieldrin, or 5% DDT can be used to spray foundation plates in the basement, for spot treating around walls in the home, and for direct application to the insects. Be certain to obtain a specially prepared "non-stain" household insecticide solution, and read the label carefully before using.

Cautions

Insecticides are poisons and must be used with care to avoid accidental poisoning of humans or pets. When using an insecticide do not breathe fumes or allow sprays, especially concentrated material, to contact the body. Always wash thoroughly after using insecticides. If insecticide is spilled on clothing, change clothes at once; if spilled on skin, wash immediately with soap and water. Store insecticides where children or pets cannot reach them. Most insecticide accidents occur from careless storage. Always read and understand the label. All Cautions and directions for handling will be found there. Dieldrin is very poisonous. Handle it with extreme caution. In case of accidental poisoning, call a physician at once.